

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00 p.m., Monday, July 11, 2011
Public Safety Building, 401 E. Third Street, Newberg, OR

"Mission Statement: To give the citizens of Newberg a forum to voice traffic safety concerns, evaluate related issues, provide a liaison with the City and promote traffic safety within the community."

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Neal Klein called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Members

Present: Neal Klein, **Chair** Lesley Woodruff, **V. Chair** Doris Brandt Karl Birky
Shannon Eoff Ron Johns

Members

Absent: James Oravetz (excused) Ronald Sult (excused)
Dianna Cotter (unexcused) Josi Fettig (unexcused)

Staff

Present: Brian Casey, Police Chief Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer
Mary Newell, Support Services Manager Jennifer Nelson, Recording Secretary

Ex Officio

Present: Mayor Bob Andrews

Others

Present: Donald Callas and David Jeffery

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) Review and approve minutes of June 13, 2011

MOTION #1: Brandt/Johns to approve the Traffic Safety Commission Minutes for June 13, 2011. (6 Yes/0 No/3 Absent [Cotter, Oravetz, Sult]) Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A) TSC-11-020: College-Sheridan Crosswalk Request
TIME – 7:02 PM

Mr. Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer, presented the staff report (see official meeting packet for full report).

Mr. Donald S. Callus spoke of the many accidents he has witnessed in the area since he has lived there and of this area being a transition zone between urban Newberg and rural Newberg. His concerns are for the visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists and their ability to cross safely competing with the traffic and congestion occurring at this intersection. He said he spoke with city staff and they are concerned this will convey the idea that vehicles only need to stop for pedestrians crossing at a painted crosswalk; but, he and his wife are concerned someone will be killed here since there have already been serious injuries. He requested this crosswalk painting to give people a safe way to get across College Street while walking or riding their bicycles on Sheridan Street.

Commissioner Lesley Woodruff asked if he has observed people crossing more on the north or south side of Sheridan Street across College Street. Mr. Callus replied more on the south side.

Staff recommended a traffic study be conducted with a request to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to provide a report as well since the traffic is coming from 99W. He will report back in October with more information.

B) General Traffic Order: Temporary Street Closures for *"Tunes on Tuesday"*
TIME – 7:13 PM

MOTION #2: Brandt/Birky to approve a general traffic order. (6 Yes/0 No/3 Absent [Cotter, Oravetz, Sult])
Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

A) TSC-11-006: Main-North Crosswalk Request
TIME – 7:14 PM

Mr. Chiu presented the staff report (see official meeting packet for full report).

Mayor Andrews asked if the \$3,500.00 estimated of costs included a paved shoulder or just the installation of the sidewalk. Mr. Chiu said the \$3,500.00 is just to make a connection with the existing sidewalk at both locations needed; it would cost \$7,000.00 to \$8,000.00 for everything, including the paving with asphalt, concrete, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access ramps.

Mr. Dave Jeffery owns the old stone church on Main Street and renovated this into a wedding chapel and conference center after purchasing. He had not noticed how much traffic runs through there until he started having events and heard complaints about guests trying to get back out onto Hwy 240 having a difficult time. He said there is sidewalk on both sides with no ADA access, the west side is at street level, and there is less than three feet of gravel between the sidewalk and pavement. He expressed appreciation for the recognition up to the State level regarding the issue, although he was surprised the State report did not think there was that much traffic there.

Chair Klein asked who he sees using this intersection the most school: children or customers. Mr. Jeffrey replied he does not hold events that require street crossing and spoke of foot traffic both north and south on 4th Street to Illinois Street with school kids and people cutting through from Morton Street. Mainly he has seen a problem with pulling out because of the curbs there being challenging; if there are pedestrians present, it is even more challenging to pull out.

Commissioner Woodruff added the Chehalem Park and Recreation District (CPRD) Armory is located further west of there and pedestrian traffic may be caused by people going to and from events there.

Commissioner Karl Birky stated both requests heard this evening regarding crosswalks were reasonable, however, we do not know if marking a crosswalk makes it safer or not. He referred to a book stating “marking a crosswalk is a relatively ineffective safety measure and may raise the pedestrians’ crash risk.”

Commissioner Shannon Eoff said she felt a crosswalk might be good here because the west side is not a corner and drivers may not stop for pedestrians in the middle of the block and people coming out from an event there may be the drivers’ only cue to stop.

Commissioner Ron Johns asked who is crossing the street since most people attending the event are not parking on the other side; he wanted to know who would be complaining about this. Mr. Jeffery stated they have not had large enough events to utilize or observe off-street parking; most parking is on the west side and in the back of the church. Commissioner Johns asked if he would be expecting to hold larger events there that may require crossing. Mr. Jeffery said they do intend to hold larger events but his concerns were not as much for our activities as they are because of their surprise at the huge amount of traffic there without a crosswalk. He spoke of when the approach to Illinois Street was redone and a diagonal crosswalk being placed there, but no crossing for Hwy 240. He added his experiences as a school bus driver in this area and other drivers not stopping even when the lights are engaged. He did agree there would be an advantage in the future for the building he owns to have a crosswalk. Commissioner Johns spoke of research showing pedestrians feel safe with a crosswalk and just walk and there can be a higher rate of accidents as opposed to unmarked crossings. He wondered if the State considers this a crosswalk area because there is an intersection.

Chair Klein said he shared the opinion this would be like putting a band-aid on tumor and did not think it would be the fix needed here. He was concerned it may actually create a more dangerous situation for the pedestrian that just walks out there thinking they have the right of way and the cars coming around the curve. He would agree to put in a crosswalk only if it could be done right with the addition of flashing lights, ADA access, etc. He is not in favor of installing a crosswalk now because the city cannot afford to do it at this level and the risk would be too high otherwise.

Mayor Andrews asked staff if installing the crosswalk would also require signage to advise drivers to look ahead. Staff replied this was correct and signage would be required.

Commissioner Eoff suggested avoiding the costs of paving by installing signs around the corner to warn drivers of pedestrians ahead.

Commissioner Woodruff stated she also would like to see a crosswalk package of maybe three or four different items combined to create a safer situation for anyone trying to cross and making them visible. She did not think a small temporary fix would be the answer to this problem.

Mr. Jeffery mentioned the City may already be liable if something happened since the situation was brought to their attention and since the State has already agreed to it he said he would be willing to write a check for \$4,000.00 to cover half of the costs if the City would pay for the other half. Chair Klein stated he sees the City’s liability going both ways if they provide a crosswalk and false sense of security and someone gets hurt there and he just wants to make sure it gets done the right way. He is also concerned for putting a statement out there to other businesses that crosswalks and stop signs can be installed anywhere when it may not always be the best solution for the problem.

Commissioner Birky added the letter from ODOT says every intersection is a legal crosswalk and wondered if marking it really makes a difference; he is not saying the law makes it safe or less safe, but it is not our job to say how to spend City money – that is up to City Council. He said we can work with ODOT to do this and cannot even put up signs without their permission. He said he is comfortable going either way in this matter.

Mayor Andrews thanked Mr. Jeffery for his generous offer and said they will take it into consideration. Chair Klein said he also appreciated Mr. Jeffery's gesture and he understands this means a lot to him; but, if they want to move forward with some type of agreement it is more important to do it right, involving ODOT and seeing if they would be willing to contribute anything, especially if we already have an offer of half right now. He also added if drivers are not driving at the suggested speed limit now then we may be putting a pedestrian out in front of those vehicles without enough time to stop. He said this will be a work in progress that should start with speaking with ODOT again and possibly working this into next year's budget since there is not funding in the current budget for this.

Commissioner Eoff suggested asking other entities like the Chamber of Commerce to consider contributors for funding since this is a pro-business decision.

Mr. Chiu spoke of conversations he has had with Mr. Jeffery about funding challenges and creative funding and he appreciates his offer to fund up to half of the project. He said he can go back to ODOT and talk to them about the pedestrian program to see if they may have any funding out there to help with this; he warned everyone there has been significant cuts to ODOT's budget as well so it may be difficult, but he will try his best. Mr. Callus added enforcement and education of drivers also needs to be considered along with this process. Chair Klein said he will table the matter for the next four or five months and will bring it back for discussion after talking with ODOT and communicating to the Chamber of Commerce and others for ideas, funding mechanisms, or grants available to make this happen the right and most effective way.

STAFF REPORTS - GENERAL INFORMATION

A) Police Update

Police Chief Brian Casey discussed an email received regarding traffic issues at the 99W Drive-In Theater gave updates on discussions and possible solutions being considered. Discussions followed regarding use of the back entrance, right-of-way dedication from Portland General Electric (PGE), not selling tickets to people parked in line on the roads, people ignoring the signs to turn off their lights when leaving the movie at the suggested back entrance, and if opening earlier would avoid the problem or just start the queuing earlier as well.

Chief Casey continued to report last month as the busiest in last twenty years with an accidental discharge of a gun, an officer involved shooting in Dundee, a DUII rollover accident, a fatal ATV accident, and a DUII related accident involving five children. He reported a successful half-marathon event in Dundee and preparations being made for the Special Olympics and the Old Fashioned Festival. Mayor Andrews commented on the situation where the man wounded by the accidental gun discharge sent a complimentary email to the City thanking the officers involved and commending the services of the police department and everyone involved.

Commissioner Woodruff asked about the speed trailer that has been on Blaine Street by Memorial Park for about three weeks now and if it is in preparation for the Old Fashioned Festival. Chief Casey said he did not have the schedule in front of them for the speed trailer locations but it could be because of upcoming activities and the fact the speed limit is only 15 mph there and a lot of cars speed up and down there; hopefully the reminder will have some impact there.

B) Engineering Update

Mr. Chiu had some additional comments about the drive-in theater and future plans to extend to Springbrook Road and previous contacts with PGE for possible partitioning of the property. He reported they are working with Frontier Communications on some utility relocation as part of the Crestview Drive improvement project through the Oxberg neighborhood and eventually that section will have sidewalk, curbs, and two compact roundabouts before finally connecting to Hwy 99W at Providence Drive. They are trying to work with the

railroad company to schedule the installation of pedestrian crosswalk paths as well with the intent to be completed this year.

Mayor Andrews asked about the area on Crestview Drive, just east of Springbrook Road and when it is scheduled for paving. Mr. Chiu said it is currently gravel road and Springbrook Properties will be doing this when they develop their parcels as a condition of improvement to be fully paved with curb, gutter, and sidewalk.

C) Items from Commissioners

Chair Klein gave an updated version of the rules and regulations for the Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) to be going to Council and asked the commissioners to read and review this for discussion with the City Attorney at the next meeting.

Commissioner Woodruff asked about the recent decision by the Council regarding Habitat for Humanity and alley way access. She felt the TSC could have been included in on this process for suggestions or recommendations so informed decisions could be made about traffic issues such as this so the TSC does not have to always play the reactive role of fixing problems that may have been avoided in the planning stage. Discussions followed regarding a way to have a check off on items in the planning stage or having a representative attend Planning Commission meetings before it moves onto Council. Mayor Andrews said this issue did come up during the discussion on this item and Council is aware of the TSC's role in making the decisions and a way to do this needs to be discussed through the Mayor's Cabinet.

Ms. Mary Newell, Support Services Manager, reported she reserved a booth for the City at the Newberg Farmers' Market for Tuesday, August 2, 2011, from 1:00-5:00 PM. They will be handing out helmets and lights; they are hoping to have the Chehalem Heritage Trail map available, someone from The Bike Shoppe may be there to talk about bicycle maintenance or to conduct a demonstration and other things. She also reminded everyone to be thinking about the mini-grant and to get ideas flowing for the August meeting since the application needs to be submitted in early September. Chair Klein suggested brainstorming some ideas via email so a list can be placed on the next agenda to be discussed.

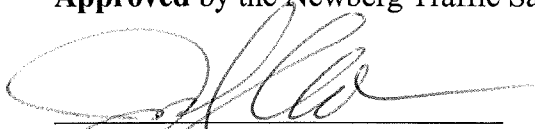
Mayor Andrews spoke of a Town Hall meeting being held by Representative Kim Thatcher tomorrow at 7:00 PM here in the PSB.

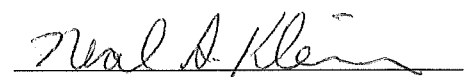
Commissioner Woodruff asked about the term of the student commissioner. Mayor Andrews replied it does end in August and the current student representative has expressed interest in being considered for reappointment. He said they need to review the specific conditions for the student commissioner and possibly open the position to accept other applications and Ms. Fettig may be able to fill the position until a replacement is found.

ADJOURN TO NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM until August 8, 2011.

Approved by the Newberg Traffic Safety Commission this 8th day of August, 2011.


Jennifer L. Nelson
Recording Secretary


Neal S. Klein
Traffic Safety Commission Chair